

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An order-acceptance management apparatus for assigning a rank to an orderer and implementing acceptance of an order for a commodity in accordance  
5 with the rank, comprising:

inventory acquisition means for acquiring information concerning number of units of a commodity in stock from storage means in which number of units of the commodity in stock has been stored upon being allocated  
10 to a group corresponding to the rank; and

determination means for determining whether an order can be accepted if the order has been issued;

wherein said determination means determines, on the basis of the information concerning the number of units  
15 in stock acquired by said inventory acquisition means, whether the commodity that belongs to the group corresponding to the rank assigned to the orderer and that is capable of satisfying the order issued is in stock, and determines that the issued order is capable  
20 of being accepted if it is determined that the commodity is in stock.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein if said determination means determines that the commodity that belongs to the group corresponding to the rank assigned  
25 to the orderer is not in stock, then said determination means determines whether the commodity that belongs to a group corresponding to a rank lower than the first-

mentioned rank is in stock; and if said determination means determines that the commodity is in stock, then said determination means determines that the issued order is capable of being accepted.

5 3. The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising allocation decision means for deciding allocation of number of units of the commodity in stock on a per-group basis.

4. The apparatus according to claim 3, further  
10 comprising dealings-performance acquisition means for acquiring information concerning dealings performance from storage means in which dealings performance on a per-rank basis has been stored;

wherein said allocation decision means decides the  
15 allocation based upon the information concerning dealings performance acquired by said dealings-performance acquisition means.

5. The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

20 delivery-schedule acquisition means for acquiring information concerning a delivery schedule of a commodity from storage means in which the delivery schedule has been stored; and

means for deciding a delivery date of a commodity  
25 for which an order has been accepted based upon the information concerning the delivery schedule acquired by said delivery-schedule acquisition means.

6. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said apparatus is connected via a communication channel to a computer that issues the order.

7. The apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising means for notifying the computer of whether the issued order will be accepted or not based upon the determination made by said determination means.

8. The apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising:

10 delivery-schedule acquisition means for acquiring information concerning a delivery schedule of a commodity from storage means in which the delivery schedule has been stored;

means for deciding a delivery date of a commodity for which an order has been accepted based upon the information concerning the delivery schedule acquired by said delivery-schedule acquisition means; and

means for notifying the computer of the delivery date that has been decided.

20 9. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a computer connected to said apparatus is provided with the storage means.

10. An order-acceptance management method for assigning a rank to an orderer and implementing acceptance of an order for a commodity in accordance with the rank, comprising:

an inventory acquisition step of acquiring

information concerning number of units of a commodity in stock from storage means in which number of units of the commodity in stock has been stored upon being allocated to a group corresponding to the rank; and

5        a determination step of determining whether an order can be accepted if the order has been issued;

         wherein said determination step determines, on the basis of the information concerning the number of units in stock acquired at said inventory acquisition step;  
10        whether the commodity that belongs to the group corresponding to the rank assigned to the orderer and that is capable of satisfying the order issued is in stock, and determines that the issued order is capable of being accepted if it is determined that the commodity  
15        is in stock.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein if said determination step determines that the commodity that belongs to the group corresponding to the rank assigned to the orderer is not in stock, then said determination  
20        step determines whether the commodity that belongs to a group corresponding to a rank lower than the first-mentioned rank is in stock; and if said determination step determines that the commodity is in stock, then said determination step determines that the issued order  
25        is capable of being accepted.

12. The method according to claim 10, further comprising an allocation decision step of deciding

allocation of number of units of the commodity in stock on a per-group basis.

13. The method according to claim 12, further comprising a dealings-performance acquisition step of  
5 acquiring information concerning dealings performance from storage means in which dealings performance on a per-rank basis has been stored;

wherein said allocation decision step decides the allocation based upon the information concerning  
10 dealings performance acquired at said dealings-performance acquisition step.

14. The method according to claim 10, further comprising:

a delivery-schedule acquisition step of acquiring  
15 information concerning a delivery schedule of a commodity from storage means in which the delivery schedule has been stored; and

a step of deciding a delivery date of a commodity for which an order has been accepted based upon the  
20 information concerning the delivery schedule acquired at said delivery-schedule acquisition step.

15. A storage medium on which has been recorded a program for causing a computer to function as the following means in order to assign a rank to an orderer  
25 and implement acceptance of an order for a commodity in accordance with the rank:

inventory acquisition means for acquiring

information concerning number of units of a commodity in stock from storage means in which number of units of the commodity in stock has been stored upon being allocated to a group corresponding to the rank; and

5       determination means for determining whether an order can be accepted if the order has been issued;

          wherein said determination means determines, on the basis of the information concerning the number of units in stock acquired by said inventory acquisition means,  
10       whether the commodity that belongs to the group corresponding to the rank assigned to the orderer and that is capable of satisfying the order issued is in stock, and determines that the issued order is capable of being accepted if it is determined that the commodity  
15       is in stock.

16.   The storage medium according to claim 15, wherein if said determination means determines that the commodity that belongs to the group corresponding to the rank assigned to the orderer is not in stock, then said  
20       determination means determines whether the commodity that belongs to a group corresponding to a rank lower than the first-mentioned rank is in stock; and if said determination means determines that the commodity is in stock, then said determination means determines that the  
25       issued order is capable of being accepted.

17.   The storage medium according to claim 15, wherein said program includes a program for causing the computer

to function as allocation decision means for deciding allocation of number of units of the commodity in stock on a per-group basis.

18. The storage medium according to claim 17, wherein  
5 said program includes a program for causing the computer to function as dealings-performance acquisition means for acquiring information concerning dealings performance from storage means in which dealings performance on a per-rank basis has been stored;

10 wherein said allocation decision means decides the allocation based upon the information concerning dealings performance acquired by said dealings-performance acquisition means.

19. The storage medium according to claim 15, wherein  
15 said program includes a program for causing the computer to function as:

delivery-schedule acquisition means for acquiring information concerning a delivery schedule of a commodity from storage means in which the delivery  
20 schedule has been stored; and

means for deciding a delivery date of a commodity for which an order has been accepted based upon the information concerning the delivery schedule acquired by said delivery-schedule acquisition means.

25 20. A program for causing a computer to function as the following means in order to assign a rank to an orderer and implement acceptance of an order for a commodity in

accordance with the rank:

inventory acquisition means for acquiring  
information concerning number of units of a commodity in  
stock from storage means in which number of units of the  
5 commodity in stock has been stored upon being allocated  
to a group corresponding to the rank; and

determination means for determining whether an  
order can be accepted if the order has been issued;

wherein said determination means determines, on the  
10 basis of the information concerning the number of units  
in stock acquired by said inventory acquisition means,  
whether the commodity that belongs to the group  
corresponding to the rank assigned to the orderer and  
that is capable of satisfying the order issued is in  
15 stock, and determines that the issued order is capable  
of being accepted if it is determined that the commodity  
is in stock.